

Experts to discuss health equity gap

DC CORRESPONDENT
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Experts from diverse fields on Monday began a brainstorming session on the growing inequities in health sector affecting mainly marginalised sections like Dalits, Adivasis, coastal population and elderly.

The national conference on 'Closing the Health Equity Gap in India' AMCCON 2018 which began at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) will identify priority areas, carry out transformational research and make an action plan to bridge inequities.

"The conference is laying special focus on vulnerability issues due to social identities such as Dalit and Adivasi, location related vulnerability such as internal migrants and disease statuses such as living with HIV and AIDS," said Dr V. Ramankutty, head, AMCHSS, highlighting the importance of the meet.

Social scientists, epidemiologists, researchers, policymakers, government representatives, world-renowned faculty, speakers and experts will be deliberating on a range of issues during the plenary sessions at the three-day event.

Over 200 researchers and practitioners from public health, community medicine and allied disciplines, public health students and representatives of voluntary organisations are taking part.

Dr Sundari Ravindran T. K., professor AMCHSS, said the conference would come out with a list of priority areas for health equity research process in India, a consensus-document based on a two-year process involving a wide-range of stakeholders.

This will be given final shape after a consultative session at the conference.

She said the primary objective of the conference was to contribute to the advancement of a sound, actionable and measurable evidence based on inequities in health in the country.

"This will help in influencing government and civil society initiatives to prioritise the reduction of health inequities," she added. Former chief secretary S. M. Vijayanand inaugurated the conference. Eminent scholar and social-epidemiologist Prof Jaime Breilh, rector of the University of Andina Simon Bolivar in Quito, Ecuador, delivered the keynote address.

Mr Vijayanand also moderated a panel discussion showcasing Kerala's contributions to addressing inequities in health.